

Aircrew Safety

Award of Distinction

Maj Nixon, Instructor Pilot, 1Lt Pine, Pilot, Lt Col Moore, Instructor Weapon Systems Officer, and 1Lt Verbanick, Weapon Systems Officer were flying a B-1B single-ship training mission to the Powder River MOA. Both Lt Pine and Lt Verbanick were flying their first training sortie since completing their Formal Training course at Dyess AFB. The Instructor Pilot had recently returned from a deployment and leave. The old safety adage that “it can happen at any time” proved to be accurate on this mission. The sortie was pretty much routine until executing the recovery, nearing the final approach. When configuring the aircraft for landing, things got interesting. Upon slat actuation, a malfunction caused by the failure of the slat torque motors left the slats stuck at an intermediate setting but more importantly prohibited any flap extension. After quick trouble shooting, the crew decided to execute a go-around and then enter the holding pattern in order to further analyze the situation. Next, the crew completed several emer-

gency checklists which even included performing abrupt vertical and lateral maneuvers in an unsuccessful attempt to lower the slats and flaps. Given the malfunction could not be corrected, the crew now diverted their attention to ensuring a safe recovery. A precarious slat only, no flap approach and landing would be required. Exact AOA would have to be maintained during the final approach and landing since the B-1B's stall inhibiting systems were not programmed for this condition. Gross weight was adjusted to the lowest possible; however, the final approach speed would still be nearly 200 knots! An on-speed landing in the touch down zone would be critical to their safe recovery. Compounding the emergency was the hot temperature which combined with the high approach speed would make for a near certainty of hot brakes. The crew accomplished a straight-in approach. A precise landing was accomplished, and the aircraft successfully stopped on the runway. Remarkably, no hot brakes or blown tires were encountered during the landing ground roll. This aircrew's superior airmanship ensured the safe recovery of a \$280 million Air Force asset and the lives of those on board.



Maj Albert P. Nixon, 1Lt Louis S. Pine, Lt Col James M. Moore, 1Lt John P. Verbanick, 28th Bomb Wing, Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota

Flight Line Safety

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Maintenance personnel were performing an aircraft wash on a B-1B Bomber in the temporary wash facility and primary fuels hangar. During the aircraft wash, the wash team determined that they needed additional safety equipment and took a short break. One person from the wash team went back to get the needed equipment and the others stepped out of the hangar for a few minutes. During this time frame, A1C Roodhouse, a Fuel System Journey-

man, walked into the hangar to conduct a spot inspection on the primary fuels hangar. A1C Roodhouse noticed the hangar was empty of personnel and he heard the sound of a wash cart left running unattended. Upon further inspection, A1C Roodhouse also noticed that the unattended wash cart was running next to the aircraft in the hangar and that the wash cart heat chamber had overheated and caught on fire. A1C Roodhouse quickly ran to the dispatch area, told his supervisor to call the fire department and evacuate the facility. A1C Roodhouse ran back into the hangar and positioned the Halon fire bottle for fire fighting purposes and held it there as the flames died down on their own. A1C Roodhouse's quick assessment of the situation and his immediate actions eliminated a potential aircraft mishap and possible loss of a valuable Air Force “War Fighting” asset.



A1C John D. Roodhouse, 28th Maintenance Squadron, 28th Bomb Wing, Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota

Ground Safety

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While deployed to Al Udeid AB, Qatar, in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, A1C Pham was launching an F-15E Strike Eagle loaded with eight GBU-12s and one GBU-10 assigned to the 335th Fighter Squadron for a combat strike mission. After engine start and while performing the last of his ground checks before marshalling the aircraft onto the taxiway, A1C Pham noticed an orange glow in the Panel 15 area between the engine intakes. He

quickly returned underneath the aircraft to investigate, and upon closer inspection, he discovered a wire bundle below the Environmental Control System in flames. He immediately returned to his launch position, calmly informed the aircrew of the situation, and directed them on the safest method of egressing the aircraft. In addition, he directed his attention to scavenge fuel that dumps upon engine shutdown and removed his “B” man underneath the aircraft sending him to a safe location. Then A1C Pham grabbed a Halon fire extinguisher and extinguished the fire while the aircrew egressed the aircraft. A1C Pham's attention to detail, calmness, and decisive actions prevented a serious ground emergency. He is likely responsible for saving the lives of the aircrew and the loss of an aircraft critical to the success of combat missions over Iraq.



A1C Thomas T. Pham, 4th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, 4th Fighter Wing, Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina

Pilot Safety

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Maj Lantz displayed extraordinary situational awareness and airmanship handling an emergency during the extremely critical take-off phase of flight. Maj Lantz was scheduled as number two of a four-ship SAT sortie. His aircraft was configured with 2X370 gallon external fuel tanks, 2XMK-84 (2,000 lbs) live munitions, suspension racks, and training missiles. Total gross weight was approximately 37,346 pounds, which is only 104 pounds shy of the 37,500-pound limit for the Block 30 aircraft. Mission preparation, briefing, step, start, taxi, and pre-take-off ground operations were uneventful. As Maj Lantz began his take-off roll the aircraft accelerated normally in full afterburner, he began to rotate his aircraft at 171-knots, and saw pieces of black matter out the right side and left side of the aircraft. He also felt the aircraft yaw to the left and heard a loud “thump” coming from somewhere on the left side. Suspecting a blown tire on take-off, Maj Lantz analyzed the situation and elected to continue the take-off as opposed to executing a heavy-

weight abort with live munitions. Tower controllers and a call from number three during Maj Lantz's take-off confirmed his assessment that he had indeed blown a tire. He continued with the take-off quickly scanning his engine instruments determining whether he had a more serious problem or engine damage. Maj Lantz declared an IFE on a single frequency approach alerting SLC departure, Hill AFB tower, and 466th Fighter Squadron SOF of his emergency. He coordinated a rejoin with number three as his chase ship who confirmed on a battle damage check the left tire on the aircraft had delaminated and there was significant damage to the left under wing, the fuselage, and more importantly the left ventral strake which holds internal aircraft fuel. Once his munitions were dropped, he proceeded to burn down fuel for approximately 45 minutes. Maj Lantz then flew a flawless straight-in approach touching down and executing a successful approach-end cable engagement. When the aircraft came to a complete stop and was met by response teams. The aircraft was pinned, shut down, and removed from the cable uneventfully. Maj Lantz's outstanding airmanship during a critical phase of flight prevented possible loss of life and minimized damage or loss of a valuable Combat Air Force asset.



Maj Mark H. Lantz, 466th Fighter Squadron, 419th Fighter Wing, Hill AFB, Utah